



samplemediaadvisory

Writing and Distributing a Media Advisory

To invite media to attend your **National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** event, it helps to create a media advisory that has all the basic details about the event on a single page. A media advisory is a brief and straightforward way to let local media outlets know about your organization's activities celebrating **Recovery Month**. This document is typically distributed to print, broadcast, cable, and Internet reporters in your area with fundamental details about your event, such as where and when it will be held.

A media advisory gives reporters just enough information to persuade them to attend your event to learn more. If there will be a compelling photo or interview opportunity at your event, highlighting this information may entice reporters to attend. Print, broadcast, and Internet media all have a need for visual images, such as an award ceremony or an appearance by a local citizen, celebrity, or government official, to complement their stories.

Stick to the Basics...

While planning your **Recovery Month** event, please refer to the media advisory template at the end of this document, which can be adapted as needed. You may use the template as the starting point for a media advisory for your event, making sure to edit the placeholders in the brackets as necessary. Electronic versions of these materials and other templates are available on the CD-ROM included in this planning toolkit, as well as on the **Recovery Month** Web site at www.recoverymonth.gov.

If you choose to write a media advisory to promote your event, please keep it short (no more than one page). Start with a short paragraph or two describing your event and why you are having it. In your description, highlight local statistics that show why it is relevant. To obtain localized information, contact the Single-State Agency (SSA) in your state, which is listed in the SSA Directory located in the "Resources" section of this planning toolkit. Inquire about both public and private patient census information, and ask about services that are available in the state for affected family members and friends.

More state-related information can be found in the **2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings**, published by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This survey is available through SAMHSA's Web site at www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh.htm, where state substance use data reports are also available.

After a brief summary of your event, a media advisory looks similar to an invitation, with the most crucial items being the details of the event: what it is, where it is taking place, the day and time it will begin, and who is participating (including news of any local celebrities who are appearing and/or speaking). It is also essential to include a contact name, telephone number, and e-mail address so reporters can ask questions in advance about your organization or event.

Following are some suggestions on how to successfully distribute your media advisory.

Remember These Tips...

Place your media advisory in the “daybooks” and in “week-ahead” columns. “Daybooks” are daily or weekly listings of all activities to which media are invited, and are not available for the general public to read. “Week-ahead” columns reach a wider audience because they are published in local newspapers and business publications. Both can help you spread key information about your event to different audiences.

To find these opportunities, use search engines on the Internet to look up newswire services (such as Associated Press and Reuters) and call the local bureau closest to your city or state. Ask for the name and contact information of the daybook editor. Submit your advisory with a note asking the daybook editor to place it on the newswire’s “daybook” the week before, the day before, and the day of the event. Please be aware that some national media services, such as PR Newswire, charge for posting information, so you may wish to inquire first. Calling local newspapers and business publications that feature upcoming activities and asking them to place the advisory in their “week-ahead” columns or calendar listings is also a good way to disseminate the media advisory.

Create a media list. You will need to send your advisory to local media early enough for them to place the details in their publication, typically one week before your event. To achieve this, you should develop an accurate, up-to-date media list to organize information about the reporters you wish to contact. This list is also imperative when it is time to distribute your news release, which will contain more information about your event. A news release template is also included in this planning toolkit. In addition, a media list can be a valuable resource to your organization even after your **Recovery Month** event. When creating a media list:

- Check your local library or bookstore for media directories of daily and weekly newspapers, local television affiliates, radio stations, newswires services, Internet news outlets, magazines, newsletters, and business trade publications in your community. Examples of media directories include Bacon’s directories, the **Yellow Book**, and Gebbie’s **All-In-One Directory**. Use the phone book and Internet research to supplement and double-check your list.
- Once you have compiled a list of media outlets, contact names, phone numbers, addresses, and e-mail addresses, call each outlet to verify the information and to determine which editors and

reporters (such as health reporters) are the most appropriate to receive your media advisory. When calling, also confirm each reporter's preferences about what time of day to be called and how far in advance he or she would prefer to be notified of an event. Today, most reporters and editors find it most efficient to have information e-mailed, so make sure you secure their e-mail addresses.

- To organize this information and keep track of your conversations with reporters, create a spreadsheet that includes the reporters' names, phone numbers, fax numbers, addresses, and e-mail addresses, along with their publications, beats, and titles. Include specialized, targeted media on your list, such as African-American, Hispanic/Latino, or other minority newspapers and radio stations. Other ideas include: university/college newspapers; television, cable, and radio stations; small community papers or neighborhood newsletters; and publications produced by local organizations and non-profits.

Follow up. After you e-mail or fax the media advisory, call the reporters to determine their interest in attending and/or covering the event. Your personal effort and persistence often can make a difference in generating media interest. Remember, however, that it is important to respect the reporter's time. Practice what you will say to the reporter beforehand so you are prepared if they answer or if the call goes to voicemail.

You are encouraged to share your plans and activities for *Recovery Month* 2006 with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), your colleagues, and the general public by posting them on the official *Recovery Month* Web site at www.recoverymonth.gov. By sharing creative executions and activities, you are helping to generate momentum, thereby furthering effective outreach that will touch the lives of millions of people.

To share your outreach efforts and community success stories during *Recovery Month*, please complete the Customer Satisfaction Form in this planning toolkit. Instructions are included on the form.

Please send samples of your organization's *Recovery Month* promotional materials to:
Office of the Director, Consumer Affairs, SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment,
1 Choke Cherry Road, 2nd Floor, Rockville, MD 20857.

Sample *Recovery Month* materials are available electronically on the CD-ROM in this planning toolkit. For additional *Recovery Month* materials, visit the *Recovery Month* Web site at www.recoverymonth.gov or call 1-800-662-HELP. For additional information about substance use disorders, treatment, and recovery, please visit SAMHSA's Web site at www.samhsa.gov.



sample media advisory

[Please adapt as needed for your event.]

[Date]

Media Advisory

[Name of Organization] to Hold Forum to Discuss the Stigma and Discrimination Linked to Substance Use Disorders and People in Recovery

An estimated [number] people in [state/community] are affected by substance use disorders, and while treatment is effective, many are hesitant to seek it due to the stigma and discrimination that often surround people in recovery. Stigma and discrimination can detract from the character or reputation of people with these disorders.

For many people, stigma can be a mark of disgrace and a barrier to receiving treatment. In 2004, 21.6 percent of the 1.2 million people who felt they needed treatment but did not receive it indicated it was because of reasons related to stigma. To remedy this issue, [organization name] will host a community forum on [date] to discuss the need to address how stigma affects those who seek treatment and how the community can overcome this barrier.

The forum is part of the 17th annual observance of **National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** and will address this year's theme, **"Join the Voices for Recovery: Build a Stronger, Healthier Community."** **Recovery Month** is a nationwide celebration of people in recovery from substance use disorders and the treatment providers who help them reclaim their lives. Discussions on how to address stigma and discrimination when approaching treatment and recovery will be the main focus.

WHO: [participants]

WHEN: [date and time]

WHERE: [address of location]

CONTACT: [name and phone number of primary contact for event]

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